

Avoiding Visa Scams

In recent years, there has been a considerable increase in visa scams that target Indian nationals. Read through this section carefully because you don't want to lose your hard-earned money to scammers or compromise your Australian visa status.

Authorised Agents

Most visa scams involve people who claim to be migration agents but are actually operating illegally. Let's take a quick look at who is legally authorised to provide advice about visas and charge for their services.

Education Agents — operate from India (and sometimes within Australia) and represent an Australian university or education provider. They are experts on the Australian education system and can manage your course enrolment, provide advice about moving to Australia, and assist you with [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Agents will be listed on the website of an Australian school, university, or education provider.

Migration Agents — are qualified professionals who have studied Australian immigration law at university. They are regulated by the Australian government and must be registered with the *Office of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (OMARA)*. Migration Agents can manage your visa applications and provide legal advice on a range of immigration issues. They may charge for their services.

Registered Migration Agents have an official registration number and are listed on the Australian government's OMARA website.

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[REDACTED]

Visa Scam Spotlight

A common visa scam that targets Indian nationals is where illegal migration agents try to convince you to switch education providers in the first six months of study — or downgrade your qualification to something cheaper.

They turn up at the airport, Indian student events, and even temple worship -- offering electronic gadgets, cash, event tickets, and travel vouchers as incentives.

Since December 2023, the Australian government has imposed measures to prevent this illegal activity and no longer allows concurrent enrolments.

Don't get mixed up in this visa scam because you risk having your student visa cancelled, being deported, and losing all the money you paid to the first university or education provider. Even worse, you could be disqualified from future opportunities to live and work in Australia.

Protecting yourself

Real migration agents are registered with the Australian government, adhere to a national code of conduct, provide correct advice, and keep you informed about the progress of your visa application.

We recommend the following best practices to protect yourself against visa scams and fake migration agents.

- Check the agent's MARN (Migration Agent Registration Number). Genuine agents will provide their full name, address, and MARN, and won't mind you cross-checking their details on the [Register of Migration Agents](#).
- Ask for a written statement that outlines the services they will be

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Never give anyone your passport or original documents. Genuine migration agents and Home Affairs officials will look at the originals,

[illegible]

- Report illegal visa activities and scammers to the authorities in either India (integrity.newdelhi@dfat.gov.au) or Australia ([Border Watch Online Report](#)).
- Familiarise yourself with the latest [Australian visa scams in India](#).

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